

ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION: IMPACTS FROM FISHING ACTIVITIES

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

CORDELL BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

ISSUE STATEMENT

Specific impacts on Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary's (CBNMS) natural resources from fishing activities and other human uses are complex and therefore difficult to document and manage. In order to make effective management decisions, CBNMS needs to work with partners to develop criteria and a process to evaluate activities that could negatively impact Sanctuary resources. This would establish thresholds and provide a more quantitative approach to making management decisions.

OUR GOAL

To better understand and allow for fishing activities that are compatible with sanctuary goals and ecosystem health.



Photo: CBNMS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CBNMS is located in one of the world's four major upwelling systems. The upwelling of nutrient-rich, deep ocean water provides a food-rich environment and promotes the growth of organisms at all levels of the marine food web. The vertical relief and hard substrate of Cordell Bank provides habitat with nearshore characteristics in an open ocean environment 20 nm from shore. The tremendous biodiversity found in the vicinity of Cordell Bank includes fish, marine mammals, seabirds, algae, and benthic and pelagic invertebrates.

Commercial and sport fisheries in CBNMS have generally targeted rockfish, flatfish, salmon, albacore tuna, and crab. Most of the private boats and charter vessels that fish CBNMS are from Bodega Bay, although rough ocean conditions often prevent smaller recreational boats from accessing Cordell Bank. Gear types used in CBNMS have included bottom trawl, mid-water trawl, hook and line, gill nets, crab traps, and long lines (including troll long line, vertical long line, and fixed gear long line). Management of commercial and recreational fisheries in California is the responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC).

THE JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW (JMPR)

Ecosystem Protection: Impacts from Fishing Activities is one of the action plans in the CBNMS Draft Management Plan (DMP). The DMP includes five action plans that, once finalized, will guide sanctuary management for the next five years. The plan is a revision of the original management plan, developed when the sanctuary was designated in 1989, and is focused on how best to understand and protect the sanctuary's resources. The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) is updating the management plans for Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries in what is known as the Joint Management Plan Review.



CORDELL BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

CBNMS protects an area of 397 square nautical miles (526 square miles) off the northern California coast. The sanctuary is an area of special significance due to its unique geological and oceanic features that create conditions which support extraordinarily diverse and abundant marine life.

CBNMS is located in one of the world's four major coastal upwelling systems. The combination of oceanic conditions and undersea topography provides for a highly productive environment in a discrete, well-defined area (Schmieder, 1982a). The main feature of the sanctuary is Cordell Bank, an offshore granite bank located on the edge of the continental shelf. The vertical relief and hard substrate of the Bank provides benthic habitat with near-shore characteristics in an open ocean environment, 20 nautical miles from shore.



ACTION PLAN

The sanctuary's Ecosystem Protection: Impacts from Fishing Activities Action Plan was developed jointly with a variety of local fishermen, fisheries experts, and conservation partners and includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Establish consistent and coordinated region-wide sanctuary representation at the Pacific Fisheries Management Council and Fish and Game Commission meetings.
- Establish an ongoing process to track and evaluate fishing and other human-use activities and their impacts in and around sanctuary waters.
- Develop policy recommendations or management action(s) to address impacts from fishing and other human-use activities on sanctuary resources.
- Work with Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries to develop a recommendation made to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council to address impacts on marine ecosystems in and around sanctuary waters from krill harvesting.
- Profile fishing activities and communities in and around the sanctuary to better understand levels of impacts specific to CBNMS.

TO GET INVOLVED

CBNMS welcomes your ideas about important resource management issues in the sanctuary. A Draft Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement are scheduled for release to the public in 2006. Following their release, hearings will be held in several locations throughout the region to gather public comment. Written comments will be accepted as well. To find out about public hearings, or how to submit written comments, please visit our website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan>.